

The Rufford Foundation

Final Report

Congratulations on the completion of your project that was supported by The Rufford Foundation.

We ask all grant recipients to complete a Final Report Form that helps us to gauge the success of our grant giving. The Final Report must be sent in **word format** and not PDF format or any other format. We understand that projects often do not follow the predicted course but knowledge of your experiences is valuable to us and others who may be undertaking similar work. Please be as honest as you can in answering the questions – remember that negative experiences are just as valuable as positive ones if they help others to learn from them.

Please complete the form in English and be as clear and concise as you can. Please note that the information may be edited for clarity. We will ask for further information if required. If you have any other materials produced by the project, particularly a few relevant photographs, please send these to us separately.

Please submit your final report to jane@rufford.org.

Thank you for your help.

Josh Cole, Grants Director

Grant Recipient Details	
Your name	Robert van Zalinge
Project title	Improving stakeholder understanding of Sarus Crane ecological requirements for management of key wetlands in Cambodia
RSG reference	18481-1
Reporting period	16 October 2015 to 20 September 2016
Amount of grant	£4970
Your email address	robert.vanzalinge@yahoo.com
Date of this report	20 September 2016

1. Please indicate the level of achievement of the project's original objectives and include any relevant comments on factors affecting this.

Objective	Not achieved	Partially achieved	Fully achieved	Comments
Provide a better understanding of Sarus Crane food availability and accessibility in the Cambodian dry season at key wetlands		✓		Data was collected as outlined in the proposal (except for work at Boeung Prek Lapouv, as the site dried out too rapidly, and we were not able to assess crab biomass). All data was collected on a monthly basis (more frequently than originally planned). The data is currently being analysed. Results look promising and I am confident the data will fill knowledge gaps; however it needs more analysis at this stage.
Involve conservation organisations and government throughout the project duration			✓	I worked closely with conservation organisations working in Cambodia on crane conservation and with the Cambodian Government. In July 2016, the International Crane Foundation organised an action planning workshop, coinciding with the completion of my study. The action plan is expected to be finalised by the end of the year and will include research findings.
Involve local communities throughout the project duration, so that they will be in a better position to take up an important role in conservation work and awareness raising among their communities			✓	Two local community members were recruited at three sites: Anlung Pring, Ang Trapeang Thmor and Stoung. Each team was given a field kit (backpacks, shovel, sample bags, forms, folder, pens etc.). The teams were trained in data collection and sites were visited every month to review data collected and discuss further activities. All teams quickly became proficient in the methods.

				During site visits, when meeting other people from the communities they would often talk about their work and crane conservation. At both AP and ATT members from teams are increasingly participating in the work of local site conservation. In Stoung they were already part of a local conservation group.
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2. Please explain any unforeseen difficulties that arose during the project and how these were tackled (if relevant).

In 2015/2016 there was an extreme regional drought. Boeung Prek Lapouv has been rapidly drying out following the wet season over the last 5 years or more, due to increasing cultivation of irrigated rice in the area. The drought meant that cranes stayed a very short time at BPL and the site was also no longer accessible by boat in late December 2015 (in previous years conditions were still suitable until end of January at least). The drought and the practical difficulty of installing and monitoring crab traps led us to abandon trying this as there were more than enough other activities to focus on.

3. Briefly describe the three most important outcomes of your project.

Important data collected to help provide a better understanding of ecological requirements of the sarus crane and how to conserve/manage wetlands for cranes.

I worked closely with a young Cambodian conservationist, Kit Sokny (research assistant). He has developed skills in ecological research and will very likely continue to work for one of the international conservation organisations active in Cambodia.

Involvement of local people greatly contributed to the continuity and scope of data collection and also provided an appreciated source of income to certain poor households. Involvement in the project has facilitated a local level understanding of cranes and their requirements and I believe a greater appreciation for this species.

4. Briefly describe the involvement of local communities and how they have benefitted from the project (if relevant).

Individuals from local communities participating in this project are now in a better position to become involved in site conservation or if they already were, it has increased their capacity to do so. Conservation organisations have approached some of the members in my local research teams with either permanent jobs or with positions in local committees working on site activities (e.g. tourism) and management.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

I have talked with conservation organisations about continuing certain activities, such as monitoring cranes and implementing new ones, such as conducting a grassland nest occupancy survey in breeding areas. I have recommended that they employ Kit Sokny and it would be great if he would fill a new position overseeing sarus crane research and conservation activities. However, not all of this may come to fruition exactly as described here as it is dependent on the organisations themselves. The organisations I have collaborated with all have a desire to see strong involvement of local communities and they will continue to build capacity and long-term involvement.

The action plan that is being prepared will hopefully help guide management of these wetlands, strengthen community involvement further and increase the level of commitment by conservation organisations and particularly government to achieving successful conservation of the sarus crane in Cambodia.

6. How do you plan to share the results of your work with others?

There has been a short story about my research in the university's news magazine "Origins" and was invited for a brief radio interview for a local station in Darwin, Australia. I have held and will continue to hold presentations now and then. I aim to publish the research findings and also use my findings to make recommendations in the action plan.

7. Timescale: Over what period was The Rufford Foundation grant used? How does this compare to the anticipated or actual length of the project?

The grant was used mainly for field work from November 2015 to May 2016, as anticipated.

8. Budget: Please provide a breakdown of budgeted versus actual expenditure and the reasons for any differences. All figures should be in £ sterling, indicating the local exchange rate used.

Budget in £ sterling, converted from US\$ at rate of 1US\$ = 0.66£ (rate from 6 November 2015, the date funds were received in Cambodia)

Item	Budgeted Amount	Actual Amount	Difference	Comments
Salary for research assistant (RA)	672	871	-199	I continued to employ Sokny (RA) under this grant one month beyond the field season as he has continued to help me with data entry. I am currently still employing him at my own cost.
Per diems for community teams	2688	2640	48	On target. Although there was no team in BPL, the teams at other sites did more work than originally planned.
Supplies	90	149	-59	Some items had to be replaced/were used more than anticipated as sampling done every month.
Travel – fuel for vehicle	800	729	71	Travel slightly more than anticipated, but petrol prices dropped.
Travel – accommodation & board for 2 people	720	581	139	I was not able to record all expenditure under this budget item. I have added an extra month salary for Sokny's work under the Salary budget line in the hope this is acceptable?
Total	4970	4970	0	

9. Looking ahead, what do you feel are the important next steps?

It will be important in the study sites to become more “hands on” in managing the wetlands, especially related to water management and ensuring surrounding farming systems are compatible with wetland management and crane conservation. There is a push towards more intensive high yielding agriculture, yet in western countries we see a shift towards sustainable and organic farming methods. The latter is of course much more suitable for farmland around key conservation areas and it would be good to increase the effort to have sustainable farming in line with site management in and around conservation areas.

10. Did you use The Rufford Foundation logo in any materials produced in relation to this project? Did the RSGF receive any publicity during the course of your work?

I used the Rufford Foundation logo in a presentation I gave in the Sarus Crane action planning workshop held 26-27 July in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. The RSGF was also acknowledged in the Origins magazine article.

11. Any other comments?

Thank you for your support.